

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for suturing tissue in the proximity of an aperture in a tissue wall, comprising:

advancing a needle from a distal side of the tissue wall to form[[ing]] a port within the tissue wall in proximity of said aperture;

passing at least a portion of a suture from the distal side of the tissue wall proximally through the port in the tissue wall; and

forming a loop with the remaining portion of the suture to secure the suture.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, [[wherein forming a port comprises:

advancing a needle through the tissue wall to form the port; and]]

wherein passing at least a portion of a suture comprises:

[[engaging the suture with the needle; and

with]]drawing the needle and suture through the port.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 1, wherein passing at least a portion of a suture comprises advancing a shaft through the aperture so that a pair of needles having a length of suture therebetween engage suture pass through the port[[s]] on opposite sides of the aperture, drawing the suture outwardly to guide the needles through the suture port into the tissue tract, and removing the ends of the suture from the needles.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 1, wherein passing at least a portion of a suture comprises advancing a shaft through the aperture so that at least one needle having a portion of suture ~~engages~~ passes through the port to ~~, engaging the suture portion with the needle~~, drawing the suture portion through the tissue and to ~~retracting~~ the needle from the port.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 1, further comprising[:]] passing the remaining portion of the suture through the ~~aperture~~ ports before the step of passing the suture portion ~~through~~ of the tissue wall.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for suturing an aperture in a vessel wall, comprising:
advancing a plurality of needles from a distal side of the vessel wall through the vessel wall to form ports in the proximity of the aperture;
passing at least a portion of a suture proximally through the ports in the vessel wall disposed on opposite sides of the aperture from the interior of the vessel from the distal side to the proximal side of the vessel wall ~~with the remaining portion of the suture passing out of the vessel~~; and
securing the ends of the suture to close the aperture.

9. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 8, further comprising[:]] passing the suture portion through the ports as a continuous loop with two ends.

10. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 8, further comprising[:]] passing the suture portion through the ports by passing at least a portion of a pair of needles therethrough while carrying the suture portion therebetween.

11. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 10, further comprising[:]] carrying the suture portion between the pair of needles as a continuous length.

12. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 8, further comprising[:] passing the needles from the ~~exterior~~interior of the vessel, through the ports in the vascular tissue, and external of the vessel so that at least a portion of the suture is external to the vessel.

13. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 8, further comprising[:] removing the suture portion from the needles after removing the needles from the vessel.

14. (Original) The method as in claim 8, wherein the portions of the suture are secured over the wall of the vessel to close an aperture.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method of suturing an opening in a vessel wall, comprising:
positioning opposite ends of a length of suture within the vessel;
puncturing holes through the vessel wall from a distal side of the vessel wall with a pair of needles; and
pulling the opposite ends of the length of suture through the vessel wall, wherein each needle pulls an end of the length of suture in a proximal direction through the holes in the vessel wall.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising[:] tying the opposite ends of the length of suture to close an opening in the vessel wall.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the opposite ends of the suture loop are positioned within the vessel by:
supporting the opposite ends of the length of suture on a distal end of an elongated member; and
advancing the elongated member through the opening in the vessel wall such that the distal end of the elongated member is positioned within the vessel.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein each of the pair of needles moves in a path which is radially angled to the elongated member as the needles pass through the vessel wall.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the ends of the needles move radially outwardly from the elongated member prior to passing through the vessel wall.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the holes are disposed transversely across the width of the vessel wall.

24. (Currently Amended) A method for suturing tissue in the proximity of an aperture in a tissue wall, comprising:

advancing a suturing device having a distal end and a flexible sheath extending therefrom through the aperture in the tissue wall;

passing at least one needle and at least one portion of a suture from the distal side of the tissue wall; and

forming a loop with the remaining portion of the suture to secure the suture.